

*Does this scenario describe
your congregation?*



OUR CHURCH HAS COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM A LOCAL COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

Take a step

Your congregation does not have to launch a major program with significant staff time commitment to have an impact on college students. By taking a single step, your congregation will begin a journey that could have a significant impact on the spiritual life of a student and their campus.

Does this describe your ministry? Our church has college students from a local college or university in our midst during the school year; we would like to actively engage these students and minister to them. Then consider the following strategies:

1. **Pray & Connect** – pray regularly and specifically for the students and the campus; tell the students who attend your church that you are praying for them and encourage them to submit prayer requests. Involve the prayer ministry at your church in this effort. Praying for the campus(es) from the pulpit is a great way to encourage members of your congregation to consider being involved in campus ministry.
2. **Social Media** – The pastor or a volunteer could “friend” students on Facebook or perhaps set up a Facebook group. This will also help you communicate more effectively with students. They rarely read e-mail these days.
3. **Adopt-A-Student** – Lake Forest Church in North Carolina has found that this type of program is really welcomed by students. First-year students may be experiencing difficulty adjusting to living away from home and an occasional home-cooked meal would be greatly appreciated. Older students, especially juniors and seniors, are eager to make connections with the community as they begin to think about life after graduation. A program that pairs host families in the church with students is also a great way to expose students to Christian family life. This could be a real blessing to students who did not grow up in Christian homes. Some additional benefits of this program are:
 - While college students are ministered to by more mature Christians, the students in turn are positive role models to the children of the families. It works both ways.
 - This model is relatively easy to implement, and begins to build relationships in the church immediately.
4. **Mentorship Program** – Develop a mentorship program to equip and resource adults to mentor students starting as seniors in high school and continuing through college and beyond. This is a bit more commitment than Adopt-A-Student, so think through ways to train and provide materials to those willing to mentor. Mentorships may be a natural outgrowth of Adopt-A-Student participants.
5. **Sunday School Class** – Consider establishing a College or “College and Career” Sunday School class.



JOIN US! Please let us know what the Lord has led you to do by joining the “EPC College Ministries” Facebook Group (<http://on.fb.me/z8xNm6>). *May the Lord richly bless your work!*

6. **Feed Them** – Hold a lunch for students after church once a semester.
 - Either at a home or at the church.
 - The presence of the senior pastor and other pastoral staff would send a strong message to the students—you are important to us.
 - Free food attracts college students; they may also feel more comfortable in a more intimate event other than an all-church event.
 - The best time is typically early in the semester
7. **Partner with Campus Ministries** – Support established parachurch ministries (Coalition for Christian Outreach-CCO, Navigators, Cru, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship) or church-associated ministries (Campus Outreach) at work on your campus. Familiarize yourself with the ministries active on campus and begin to develop relationships with the campus ministry staff. Remember, leaders new to the community will be looking for a home church. This is an opportunity for rich relationships and effective partnerships. Every parachurch campus ministry encourages their students to attend a local church on Sunday. Be sure that your local campus workers know of your church's interest in serving their students. Also, remember that after graduation many students end up living in your community. If they do, they will already have a church home. Other ways to support campus ministries include:
 - Offer to speak at campus meetings.
 - Mentor students involved as a leader in campus ministries such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA).
8. **Develop Relationships with Campus Chaplains** – Although the campus chaplain may be ordained in a denomination more liberal than the EPC, building relationships with them could prove to be beneficial if the parachurch organizations need an advocate for their work on campus.
9. **Sponsor Special Events** – Host events that appeal to your congregation and the campus. Invite a special speaker known nationally who can speak to issues relevant to believers as well as those with academic interests. For example, Central Presbyterian in Missouri sponsors Faith and Public Life Lectures that address matters of public interest from the viewpoint of Christian faith. Because the Christian faith and intellectual tradition have vast resources to address the most pressing problems of our world, our churches have an opportunity to present public forums where these perspectives can be presented and debated.
10. **Additional Things to Remember When Working with College Students.**
 - Recognize that the semester schedule does not coincide well with the church calendar.
 - Churches have an opportunity to encourage students to develop an attitude of service. Students are likely to respond to opportunities to serve in ways that do not require too much of a time commitment. Example: Helping out on a parent's night out event, community playground cleanup or raising money for a well in Africa.
 - Personally inviting students will often be more effective than putting out a general request for help.
11. **Church Membership** – Offer opportunities for students to formally affiliate with your congregation. Church membership might be a new concept to some students, especially those who become a believer while in college.
 - Some students will want to join the church; make them aware of the opportunity and encourage them to begin the process.
 - Consider offering a membership class on campus at alternative time and place (i.e. local coffee shop) if a group of students emerges.
 - Explain the role of church membership and its importance; don't assume that student understand the issue.
 - Some students will want to keep the church membership at home but offer an opportunity to affiliate with your congregation.
12. **Missions Opportunities** – Encourage students to participate in your mission trips. Make sure that students feel welcome to join in – this can be an amazing way to join in the local church and develop a common heart for missions.
13. **EPC World Outreach Opportunities** – Make them aware of opportunities, walk alongside them as they consider options and support them financially, emotionally, and prayerfully through the process.
14. **Internships and Service Opportunities** – Offer opportunities for students to serve in the summer. Internships, with some pay, provides motivated staff for your summer programs and also provides an opportunity for students to gain experience ministering in the church as well as to explore the ministry as a vocation.
15. **Don't Forget Staff and Faculty** – While most of our attention is on ministry to students, realize that members of your congregation who work on local campuses are in a strategic position to also minister to college students and to impact the campus for Christ. Consider sponsoring an occasional gathering as a way of encouraging them to see their workplace as a mission field.
16. **Summer Ministry** – If you have a large number of students returning to your congregation during the summer, consider developing a summer ministry to them. Information on how to get started may be found below.